

A D V E N T I S T

AUGUST 15, 1996

Cutting Edge

# Review



**Gender Wars**

**Team Sports?**

**3 R's  
of Caring  
for God's Earth**



# LETTERS

## Jessica's Joy

William Johnsson's "Jessica and Joy" (June 20) made me squirm a little. "Joy in Jesus" is certainly the genuine thing, and a lot has been made of Jessica Dubroff and her parents' idea of joy. But we know Jesus *did* influence Jessica's concept of joy.

Jessica's father lived next to one of our Adventist families, the Patric Rutherford family. Patric is our head elder. When Patric accepted the leadership of our Kingston, Jamaica, hospital and had to accelerate the completion of his home remodeling before moving, we all pitched in to help. So did Jessica, and she was special. Those church members who worked with her loved her.

She also came with the Rutherford family to Sabbath school and church several times. In Sabbath school she probably sang "I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart . . ." and "If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands . . ." etc.

I don't recall what I preached on those several times she sang and prayed and worshiped with us. But we do ask the Holy Spirit to bring peace and hope and joy every Sabbath, and I know He hears.

Jesus as the source of genuine joy? No question.

Jessica as an example of one with counterfeit joy? Poor choice.

—**Curtis Church**, PASTOR  
MOUNTAIN VIEW, CALIFORNIA

## Losing Sleep

Every issue gets better and better. I finished the last issue (June 20) about 5:00 a.m. Just couldn't put it down. The articles are so meaningful and

## Two Weeks Away . . . From One Special Day

It makes up one seventh of earth's history—yet most people don't know the first thing about it.

The Sabbath.

Have you ever wanted to share the joy of God's day of rest with an exhausted neighbor? an ambitious coworker? a devout truth-seeker?

On August 29 the *Review* will provide you with the ideal tool. Our special 40-page issue devoted to the Sabbath will feature:

—testimonies from real people about the difference the Sabbath makes in their lives

—a major biblical treatment on what the Sabbath means and why we should keep it

—principles for Sabbathkeeping

—the Sabbath and kids

—the Sabbath and the environment

—the Sabbath and freedom

All in a colorful, personal, nonconfrontational format.

"The Sabbath Is for Joy." You know it and we know it. Maybe by September our friends and neighbors will know it too.

practical. Sally Streib and Sandra Doran and William Johnsson—well, for that matter, every article had a very special meaning. God bless the efforts

of all who are doing such a wonderful piece of work.

—**Ruth I. Van Zant**  
LONGMONT, COLORADO

## Irreverent

I was shocked that the *Review* would actually print "Bible Bloopers" (Give & Take, June 20). We are to be sanctified and reverent and act as though we are in God's presence at all times. To me this was very sacrilegious. We need uplifting articles, not articles that are irreverent.

—**Dorothy McKenzie**  
MOUNT DORA, FLORIDA

## The Best Medicine

After reading the latest Growing Up Adventist ("Juniors," June 20), I too am compelled to write and say how much I enjoy the *Review* (my "letter from home"). Andy Nash's Growing Up Adventist really makes my day.

God bless you all as you continue not only to uplift and inspire, but also to provide laughter, "the best medicine."

—**Karen Grob**  
SALMSACH, SWITZERLAND

## Pioneers—New and Old

I was most encouraged to read Jackie Ordelheide Smith's "The New Pioneers" (June 13). It is pleasing indeed to read of the advance of the



gospel taking place in Irian Jaya. God is surely blessing the pioneers, and a great harvest should result.

Having been somewhat of a pioneer in Papua New Guinea some 50 years ago, I can appreciate the effort being put forth as the message penetrates this mountainous country. As in Irian Jaya, we had nationals who walked for days to spread the good news. The introduction of mission aircraft certainly speeded up the outreach and gave great support to the national missionaries. It all paid off as God led and abundantly blessed. Today the membership in Papua New Guinea is moving toward the 200,000 mark. The descendants of those who accepted the gospel are the leaders of the church today and also occupy senior government positions.

Once the message penetrates and Christian education is introduced, it is amazing how people once removed from the primitive can achieve and serve. Recently a son of one of these pioneers was awarded a doctorate in pure mathematics by the university in Fife, Scotland.

Keep the good work going in Irian Jaya. We will rejoice with you as the Spirit continues to lead.

—**Robert R. Frame**  
HENDERSONVILLE,  
NORTH CAROLINA

### Fighting Back

After reading some negative letters about the "new *Review*," I felt I must write and tell you how much I've enjoyed it.

I'm a struggling Adventist after being raised very legalistically in this faith. I yearn for a "victorious Christian life," and slowly I'm maturing in this walk. Magazines such as yours help considerably.

I'm proud to see you covering subjects hitting close to home for this 36-year-old married woman, and addressing issues I never thought I'd see. These are the things that will attract us back to the church. I think

many want to come back but are afraid of the judgments of others. Please be patient as we try to make our way back.

Keep up the good work. You are doing a terrific job. The issues never come fast enough for me.

—**Laura Ellegard**  
WINTER HAVEN, FLORIDA

### Pork Distribution (cont.)

In light of Calvin Rock's advice not to distribute pork products (Faith Alive! Apr. 25), what advice would he give to young people who work in the food service industry? In order to meet educational costs, many handle pork products while employed as cooks, waiters, attendants, etc., in the summer months.

—**Stephen F. Little**  
FREDERICK, MARYLAND

### Not Alone

In response to the woman whose husband left the ministry after many years of service ("I Used to Be a Pastor's Wife," Feb. 29), I want to assure her that she is not alone.

I also am of the same "cast-off" category as she. My husband was laid off more than a year ago because of "financial cutbacks." It has been a very painful year for our family, which includes minor children still at home. Fortunately, our marriage has been strengthened by this experience, but our children continue to suffer in many ways. Job hunting is extremely difficult after being a Protestant minister for so long. Some conference administrators do not lay off ministers until they are assured of placement elsewhere. This seems the most compassionate course.

Please send my E-mail address to any person who desires dialog with an empathetic ex-pastoral couple.

—**Name Withheld**  
BRITANNIA@JUNO.COM

# ADVENTIST Review

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# ADVENTIST Review

"Behold, I come quickly . . ."

Our mission is to uplift Jesus Christ through stories of His matchless love, news of His present workings, help for knowing Him better, and hope in His soon return.

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# Midnight Encounter

WILLIAM G. JOHNSON

A couple weeks ago I was standing on the road outside College View church in Lincoln, Nebraska, talking with Bob Woolford, assistant to the president of Shawnee Mission Medical Center. It was close to midnight when a truck drove by, then stopped. The driver got out and came over to us. "Will you pray with me?" he asked.

Tears were running down his face. His breath smelled of alcohol as he sobbed: "I can't go on living. I've ruined my life. My wife has left me, and I can't live without her."

We prayed, talked with him awhile, and told him to get some sleep and come and see one of the pastors the next day. At last he drove off.

That midnight encounter—did it just happen?

The response you give puts you on one side or the other in the way you understand God. God either intervenes in the affairs of our lives or He does not; God is either a personal being whom we can know or He isn't; God either makes a difference in our lives or He does not.

It seems to me that these options define the spiritual watershed of our times—and indeed of every generation. The difference today is that many people use "God-talk"—they sound as if they believe in a God who makes a difference in daily life, but their actions show they don't.

Another way of describing the divide is in terms of naturalism and supernaturalism. The natural order is real; is the supernatural world just as real, and does it intersect with the natural? That is the big question of our day. Science and its accompanying technology have brought countless benefits to humanity, and we all—naturalists and supernaturalists—daily depend upon them. Can we have just as much confidence in the reality of a God whom we can know as our best friend, who is always there for us?

The purely naturalistic view of life sees everything as the interaction of forces that can be individually identified and examined. God—if He exists—is separate and apart. Human encounters, like the man at midnight, seem the product of chance or luck.

Don't talk of miracles in this scenario. What appears startling to us has a natural explanation, if we only knew enough.

And the Bible becomes just a book. It contains moral instruction and tells the stories of many good men and women, but forget divine inspiration. Forget about a virgin birth of

Jesus—that couldn't happen. Forget about Jesus' resurrection—dead people don't come back to life. Forget about Jesus being the God-man—this order knows only man within its boundaries. Forget about an atoning death for sin. Forget about prayer going beyond the reach of our voice.

*I believe in God—  
not chance.*

In radical contrast, the Bible declares a God who intervenes. He not only guides the starry hosts (Isa. 40:26); He watches over the universe of inner space—the atom and the molecule. So great is His mind that He can take note of every individual on the planet, track the course of each life, and so superintend events that two people will meet at a time and place so that good things can happen. God does not normally intervene to miraculously deliver His people from suffering and death (He does so occasionally, but not usually) lest human freedom be skewed. But He is always *there* for His people; He provides grace for every situation. He hears every prayer and answers. Not a sparrow falls without God's notice.

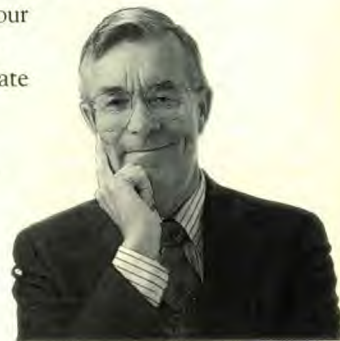
This is the God of the Scriptures. This is the God of Ellen White, who believed herself called to be His messenger, and who trusted in Him as a child trusts a parent. And this is the God who, in supreme demonstration of His love, came to be one with us and at last went to Calvary to take away our sins.

The sad part is that we Seventh-day Adventists can repeat these words without knowing their living reality. We can be practical pagans, trusting in the natural, relegating God to the margins of our existence. Even while working as ministers and leaders we can operate out of a secular framework.

What about that midnight encounter—was it by chance? by luck?

I don't believe in chance—I believe in God.

I don't believe in luck—I believe in God.





# Go, Team!

**I**t bothers me that Christians are often portrayed in the media as one-dimensional beings—Bible-thumping extremists, incapable of integrating spirituality into their emotional and physical life experiences.

What makes this really sad is how some Christians reinforce this image, living “on the fringe” of society and believing that they would somehow be contaminated by even casual contact with others in society.

Yet it’s by our association with others that we transmit some of our faith values. It’s often in settings removed from church and other religious trappings that the genuineness of our religious experience is demonstrated.

I’ve followed with interest the recent dialogue in the letters to the *Adventist Review* about participation in interscholastic athletics on the high school and college level, and I would be the first to admit that athletics—like virtually everything else in life—is detrimental when carried to extremes. But I do not agree with some Adventists who apparently feel that all athletic competition is the antithesis of Christianity.

Competition is a fact of life—both in the church and in society. The fact that some people crumble under the pressure is no reason to dismiss competition wholesale.

In general, athletics reinforce some of the developmental benefits that Adventists prize—such as discipline, self-control, teamwork, being graceful in defeat (and victory), playing by the rules, and using one’s talents. These characteristics are essential for success in life—as well as on the field or court.

Some argue that rather than squandering time and energy on things so “frivolous” as competitive basketball, volleyball, track, softball, swimming, or other sports, our youth should be giving Bible studies or preaching the gospel.

To those, I have just one thing to say: *spiritual gifts*. Just as everyone is *not* gifted scholastically or athletically, *not everyone* has the spiritual gift of personal evangelism. Yet an athlete who has a genuine relationship with Christ can witness for Him, in a variety of settings, to people he or she would not otherwise have access to.

While I was studying for my master’s degree, I played intramural softball at Andrews University. The umpires were almost always physical education majors, taking classes in

“officiating,” and learning how to handle abuse from irate players and coaches.

Once, trying to reach third base before being tagged out, I distinctly remember touching the base with my foot *before* being tagged by the fielder. The umpire yelled, “Out!”

I jumped up yelling “*I was safe by a mile!*” But umpires are trained to pretend they are right even if they are wrong, and my protests yielded nothing.

The next inning a player from the opposite team smashed the ball to deep left/center field. As the outfielder caught up with the bouncing ball and made the throw, the batter was heading for third base. From where I stood, he

clearly made it to the base before the ball did. But the umpire (and I use the term loosely) yelled, “Out!”

Oh, boy, I thought, *this is going to be interesting*. The batter was an outstanding specimen: muscular; athletic; large, bushy mustache. I thought to myself, *That umpire’s really going to get chewed out now*.

But the batter just got up, dusted the dirt off his pants, and jogged back to the dugout. He didn’t even give the umpire a dirty look.

I felt as though I had been kicked in the pants. Here I was, a seminary student, training for the ministry, acting like a whiny, multimillion-dollar-superstar crybaby, when a guy who was more than my equal responded with dignity and grace to an obvious miscarriage of justice. That afternoon I saw a mental photograph of what Jesus is like. In an instant I learned a lesson that I wouldn’t have learned in a thousand sermons (a lesson that many people I know have yet to learn).

When will we banish the notion that someone is witnessing only when giving Bible studies? Sure, it’s important to *know* our beliefs and to *share* our faith; but most important of all is being able to *live* our faith.

Isn’t that what being a Christian is all about?

To those who are serious about living their faith on the court or the field (or the home, church, office, or marketplace), I say, “Go, team! And go with God!”





# GIVE & TAKE

## ADVENTIST LIFE

New Jersey Conference president Larry Evans recently entertained students' questions in Adventist elementary and junior academy classrooms throughout the conference. Apparently, many of the students were less concerned about Evans' position than they were his title (Dr.) and size (6'5"). A few of the more popular questions:

1. How tall are you?
2. Can you give shots?
3. What size shoe do you wear?
4. What's your favorite basketball team?
5. How tall is your wife?
6. Do your boys play basketball?
7. Is your job hard?
8. Do you like to study?
9. Have you ever been offered drugs?
10. Do you know Elder Folkenberg?



## ADVENTIST QUOTES

"A saint is a person who makes goodness attractive."

—Pastor Paul Sundquist, at the Stanborough Park church, England

"300 million people live in this division; 299 million of them are not part of us."

—North American Division president A. C. McClure, at Seeds '96, a church-planting summit for pastors and lay members held at Andrews University June 12-15

"If we treat others as if we might not see them again, we will all be better friends."

—Sandra Divnick, 17, Spring Valley, Ohio

"At its heart, Christianity is not about beliefs and behaviors; it's about a relationship with God through Jesus Christ."

—Pastor David VanDenburgh, at Ohio Conference camp meeting

## BREAKING THE GRIDLOCK?



**CHANCE MEETING:** When the *Adventist Review* editorial staff got a tip that there might be an open seat on the press van accompanying the Olympic torch relay to the White House June 20, associate editor Roy Adams went downtown after it.

Arriving at the U.S. Capitol (where the runners would pause for a ceremony), Adams waited—impatiently—for the entourage. When they finally arrived, Adams discov-

ered, to his dismay, that his press credentials didn't carry enough clout to stop the van in its tracks. Chasing the unruly vehicle through sweltering heat, Adams caught up with it at the next stop only to discover that the van was filled to capacity.

A crestfallen Adams, literally bathing in perspiration, wandered over to the Capitol steps to take in the tail end of the ceremony and—surprisingly—to hobnob with well-known Georgia congressman Senator Sam Nunn (Dem.), Representative John Lewis (Dem., pictured left), and House speaker Newt Gingrich (Rep., pictured right).

"I was amazed at how down-to-earth and approachable these guys could be," says Adams. "It seemed no big deal meeting and talking with them."

Adams says he queried Gingrich about plans for a last-minute presidential bid (there were none).

"After I'd visited with these fellows for a while," says Adams, "it dawned on me that I should preserve the occasion for posterity. A woman standing nearby volunteered to take our picture."

"And who are you?" asked Adams, retrieving his camera.

"I'm Marianne Gingrich," she said. "Newt's wife."

## WE REALLY, REALLY DO NEED YOU

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ILLUSTRATION BY ELIZABETH WOLF



# The 3 R's of Caring for God's Earth

*How can we enjoy nature without exploiting it?*

BY R. WILLIAM CASH

**W**HY DO I RIDE THE bus to work instead of driving? Why do I push a hand-powered lawn mower and not a gas-

powered one? Why do I send paper through my computer printer as many as four times? Is there a reason for this madness? There is—but it came on gradually as I learned, thought, and then made some personal decisions.

Like most Adventists, I looked forward to my science classes and especially appreciated the field trips organized by my science teachers when I was young. I enjoyed “nature nuggets” at Sabbath school and the hikes we would take as Pathfinders.

As a parent I spent Saturday afternoons with my sons and family friends at zoos, nature centers, botanical gardens, or just taking walks to enjoy the out-of-doors. We explored the escarpments and canyons in eastern Tennessee and walked along the beaches and dunes at Lake Michigan. In other words, I love nature. After all, Ellen White described nature as God's lesson book.<sup>1</sup>

Yet despite growing up in a church culture that promoted a love of nature, I was never challenged about the importance of preserving our environment. That didn't happen until I met the special woman who is now my wife. I quickly discovered that the passion of her life (besides me) was the environment. Just try to discard an empty soft-drink can or a piece of recyclable paper in our house! With her encouragement, I have become much more aware of how much of a difference each of us can make in preserving the world God made for us.

I suppose many of us Seventh-day Adventist Christians are not excited about the need to care for our earth because we are too busy trying to save others' souls. Or we figure the problems we see in the world around us are signs of the last days (perhaps we think we can even hasten that day by *not* doing anything about it). I have even heard some people suggest that the horrible results from our abuse of the earth are the plagues prophesied in Revelation.

While I am not a theologian, I believe the doctrines of Creation and stewardship provide us the biblical basis for environmental concern. Our God created the earth, gave us dominion over it, and instructed us to populate it and be responsible for it.<sup>2</sup> He owns the cattle on a thousand hills and has given the world into our care.<sup>3</sup>

If we Christians see God as both our Creator and Redeemer, we will do all we can to preserve—and redeem—this creation. When God gave us this earth, it was not an invitation to damage and exploit it. But that is what we are doing by polluting the air and water. We are systematically



## How Can We Help?

### ■ Join environmental groups.

Many publish low-cost and often readable periodicals. A reference that will help you find ones that interest you is *The Nature Directory: A Guide to Environmental Organizations*, by Susan D. Lanier-Graham (Walker and Company, 1991).

### Some groups to consider:

- National Audubon Society, 700 Broadway, New York, NY 10003.
- National Parks and Conservation Association, 1776 Massachusetts Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20036.
- The Nature Conservancy, 1815 North Lynn St., Arlington, VA 22209.
- The Sierra Club, 730 Polk Street, San Francisco, CA 94109.
- The Wilderness Society, 900 17th St., NW., Washington, D.C. 20006.
- World Wildlife Fund, 1250 24th St., NW., Washington, D.C. 20037.

■ **Subscribe to periodicals.** (Many subscriptions are included in organizational memberships.) Some recommended ones are:

- Audubon* (for members of the National Audubon Society).
- International Wildlife* or *National Wildlife*, National Wildlife Federation, 8925 Leesburg Pike, Vienna, VA 22184.
- Nature Conservancy* (for members of the Nature Conservancy).
- Sierra* (for members of the Sierra Club).
- Wilderness* (for members of the Wilderness Society).

■ **Find books with practical suggestions.** Choose some that fit *your* lifestyle. Some books that approach lifestyle from the Christian perspective are:

- Campolo, Tony. *How to Rescue the Earth Without Worshiping Nature: A Christian's Call to Save Creation*. Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1992.
- Longacre, Doris Janzen. *Living More With Less*. Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1980.
- Wilkinson, Loren and Mary Ruth. *Caring for Creation in Your Own Backyard: Over 100 Things Christian Families Can Do to Help the Earth*. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Servant Publications, 1992.

• *Volunteer.* Recycling centers and other environmental organizations could use your help.

destroying our land and sea habitats.

When plants were created, God provided the active ingredients for many drugs used in modern medicine. However, rather than "subduing" the earth by screening plants for their use (only 1 percent of the tropical plants at this time have been screened), we humans are destroying nearly 6,000 acres of tropical forest, home to more than half our planet's species, *each hour*.<sup>4</sup>

Further, we widely pollute the air with sulfur dioxide, ozone, oxides of

nitrogen, and particulates that are linked to many respiratory diseases and lowered life expectancy.<sup>5</sup> The effect of pesticides on human embryo development has been documented. Some researchers think this may explain the rise in breast and testicular cancer and the drop in male sperm counts. For years we did not believe we were susceptible to compounds that are toxic to insects because the human body mass is so much larger. Today we know that the same chemicals that poison an insect's cell are also toxic to

human cells. At the embryo level we are equally vulnerable.<sup>6</sup>

### The Three R's

So what are some of the things we can do to protect our environment? The three R's I'm learning to practice are: reduce, reuse, and recycle. Each of us can find ways of incorporating these principles into our everyday lives.

### ■ Reduce.

Where can we reduce? The amount of driving we do is a case in point. Seventy percent of Americans drive to work alone, 12 percent carpool, and only 5 percent use public transportation.<sup>7</sup> This means we consume tremendous amounts of fuel and also increase the amount of contaminants in the air. When carpooling and public transportation cannot be arranged, we can *reduce* our driving by planning our errands to make fewer and more efficient trips. We can also drive more slowly.

Lawn care is another area in which we can reduce the waste of resources. In the United States we spend \$1.5 billion annually for pesticides, not to mention herbicides and fertilizers. These 67 million pounds of chemicals contribute to the toxic brew infiltrating our ground water supply.<sup>8</sup>

Biologists tell us that most of this toxic lawn care is not necessary—there are other environmentally sound ways to control our insect and weed pests. Organic materials can enhance the growth of our lawns and plants, and low-maintenance native plants can be used to landscape our yards. Since gasoline-powered lawn and garden equipment accounts for nearly 10 percent of all air pollution in the United States, we should use human-powered mowers and other unpowered yard tools whenever possible.<sup>9</sup>

### ■ Reuse and Recycle.

When it comes to recycling and reusing, waste consultants tell us we can recycle everything. Where we live



in suburban Maryland our municipality picks up plastic, glass, metal, and newspapers weekly. Local recycling centers accept cardboard, clothing, telephone books, yard trim, mattresses, and household hazardous waste. They also accept appliances, furniture, and building materials.

If not recycled or reused, these things are disposed of and accumulate at a rate of nearly a ton per person annually in the United States.<sup>10</sup> Experience has shown that when residents are charged by the pound for the collection of solid waste, the amount disposed of drops dramatically!<sup>11</sup>

The office is a good place to reduce and reuse paper products. For example, we can save computer output by printing drafts on the reverse side of previously used paper. Many times, rather than printing out our E-mail messages, we can read them on the computer screen and file them electronically.

### Let's Begin

The paper use in offices across this country is astronomical. The General Conference headquarters alone uses 40 tons of paper each year—the product of some 700 trees. While our forests are a renewable resource, the current demand is far outstripping new growth. Where possible, offices should use recycled paper and envelopes, and recycle their paper waste. The energy and resources needed to produce recycled paper are much less than those used to produce paper from virgin sources.<sup>12</sup>

As individuals and as corporate groups we can make a difference. For example, our denominational journals and publishing houses could follow environmentally sound publishing options by using chlorine-free wood pulp paper from sources that are not from old-growth forests or operations

## Simple Ways to Make a Difference

### ■ Be a vegetarian.

The recommended vegetarian lifestyle that many Adventists practice helps! Less water, less land, and fewer chemicals are involved in producing fruits, vegetables, and grains than in producing animal products!

### ■ Further suggestions for saving the environment from your kitchen:

Pack lunches in reusable containers.

Reduce packaging by:

Buying larger quantities.

Buying at a cooperative or creating one with your friends. At a co-op you can bring your own containers rather than having large amounts of food broken into smaller units by disposable packaging.

Reduce your use of processed foods, thus saving water and energy while providing yourself more nutritious food!

that destroy ecosystems. Where possible, periodicals and books can be printed on recycled paper. All periodicals should be designed for ease of recycling (without scent strips and nonpaper inserts), using environmentally sound inks and glues. Leftover copies should be recycled, and readers should also be asked to recycle.<sup>13</sup>

Let us encourage ADRA to develop programs in the developing countries to lessen their dependency on nonrenewable resources and to replenish rather than to destroy the tropical forest habitat.

As individuals we should support environmental issues from the local to the national and global levels. Our involvement with persons involved in environmental issues follows Christ's example for meeting people where they are. My wife and I have been excited to discover how much of our diet and simple lifestyle we have in common with these persons.

I believe the issue of the

environment is similar to issues such as temperance, healthful living, and religious liberty; Adventists can take the lead!

If we do not do all we can today, what kind of world will we have tomorrow as a place to teach our children and grandchildren to appreciate nature? Will there be beaches, green areas, bike and hiking trails, and scenic views? Or will these all be artifacts and remnants of our memories?

I believe we can show our love for God by caring for the earth given to us as our present home. ■

<sup>1</sup> Child Guidance, pp. 54, 55; Education, pp. 100, 101.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. 1:28-30.

<sup>3</sup> Ps. 50:10-12.

<sup>4</sup> Laura Tangley, "Vital Statistics," National Wildlife, Apr./May 1992, p. 16.

<sup>5</sup> Curtis A. Moore, "Poisons in the Air," International Wildlife, Sept./Oct. 1995, pp. 38-45.

<sup>6</sup> Jon R. Luoma, "Havoc in the Hormones," Audubon, July/Aug. 1995, pp. 60-67.

<sup>7</sup> "Driving Lessons: Americans and Their Cars," National Wildlife, July/Aug. 1995, p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Ted Gup, "Getting at the Roots: A National Obsession," National Wildlife, June/July 1991, pp. 18-24.

<sup>9</sup> Peter Finn, "Mower Power to the People," Washington Post, Aug. 4, 1995, C1, 5.

<sup>10</sup> "Looking Back: Earth Day at 25," National Wildlife, Apr./May 1995, p. 7.

<sup>11</sup> Lisa Fine, "Chevy Chase Learning How to Trash Less," Washington Post, Oct. 5, 1995, Md1, 2.

<sup>12</sup> Paper use verified by GC purchasing agents; it takes 17-19 trees to create a ton of paper, according to Diane MacEachern, Save Our Planet: 750 Everyday Ways You Can Help Clean Up the Earth (New York: Dell Publishing, 1990), p. 143.

<sup>13</sup> John Byrne Barry, "Mea Pulpa," Sierra, Jan./Feb. 1994, pp. 59-63, 152.

R. William Cash is director of archives and statistics at the General Conference and writes from Takoma Park, Maryland.





# Praise

*It's not an option. It's our life!*

BY BRYAN AALBORG

**I**T WAS OBVIOUS THAT, LIKE US, JUST about everyone on the plane was a vacationer returning home from Florida. Disney T-shirts, Florida caps, and shorts glanced back at us from every direction.

We tucked away our carry-on baggage and buckled our seat belts. Soon we felt our backs pressed firmly against the seat as we nosed upward into a hazy summer sky.

While taking off we noticed that the father of the family in front of us had taken out his camera and was clicking pictures out the window. Quite often vacationers take a couple photos to remember the flight. But as the plane continued to gain altitude, the man continued to take pictures.

Anyone who has flown a few times knows that once you get up so high, and especially if the sky is not really clear, you are not going to see much in a snapshot taken through an airplane window. After all, those windows are kind of hazy themselves. Something inside me wanted to tap the fellow on the shoulder and suggest, "Ah, hey, bud, I don't think you are going to see a whole lot when you get those back. You know, what you see is what you get."

But I didn't. It was his vacation. His camera. His film. After a few minutes we reached cruising altitude



*I'll never know  
what made him  
take all those  
seemingly boring,  
monotonous  
pictures.*

somewhere over the Gulf of Mexico. And you guessed it. Ol' shutterbug was still clicking away, getting great shots of off-white mixed in with a little light blue.

Now I no longer wanted to give him a hint about aerial photography. Rather, I had to bite my lip to contain the chuckles. This fellow had become an amusement to us. We would hear him advance the film. Then his seat would inch backward as he craned his neck to point the lens out the window. We'd watched the routine a dozen times. The shutter would go off, and we'd elbow each other in the ribs and then muffle our snickers: "Look! He's taking another one!"

I didn't count, but it seemed as if he took nearly a whole roll—24 pictures—of clouds. Maybe he got a few trees and the runway in the first ones.

What is it that kept that thumb of his advancing that film? I wondered. Was it the experience of being above the earth? Did he have a special lens on his camera? Perhaps his hobby was clouds. Maybe he was a nephologist.<sup>1</sup>

I'll never know what it was that made him take all those seemingly boring, monotonous pictures. But one thing was clear: he was having a great time doing it.

Have you ever sat in the worship service on Sabbath morning, feeling as if you were enveloped by a hazy cloud?

You sit in your pew, buckled in by heritage, by habit, by fear. Fear that if you unbuckle, you may fall away into disaster. So you are content to endure your confined situation until you file out with the others at the close of the ordeal.

But has it ever happened that through your own monotonous cloud you notice another person, perhaps two or three seats away, completely captivated by the service, focusing intently on every item—whether it be

song, scripture reading, or personal testimonies?

To you it was all routine—like the flight attendant repeating the evacuation procedure of the aircraft. You've sung "Praise Him! praise Him! tell of His excellent greatness" at least a hundred times since you were promoted from kindergarten.

But here's this other worship "passenger" totally engaged in the service. The shutter of their soul is clicking constantly, recording sights, sounds, impressions, and thoughts on the film of their heart.

An airplane carries all kinds of passengers—the serious, the funny, the excited, the sick. Just so, God's church carries along all kinds of people day after day—the serious, the funny, the excited, the sick, the pure, the impure, the honest, the dishonest, the kind, the rude, the patient, the complaining, the boring. And those who offer praise!

Since I've never been an airplane pilot or a flight attendant, I can't speak from experience. But I would guess that pilots appreciate grateful passengers, people who thank them for guiding their plane far above the earth and attending to their needs. And don't you think that God also appreciates those who express their gratitude for the everyday care they receive, as well as for the more unusual evidences of divine intervention?

What kind of passenger are you on this journey called life? Are you sitting on the edge of your seat taking in

everything possible? Or are you just kind of . . . there?

God deserves all the appreciation, all the praise, that we are capable of giving—and then some. But it's not only for God's sake; it's for ours also. For indeed, we miss out on the fullness of life designed for us when we neglect to give God praise. We were created for praise. "This people I have formed for Myself; they shall declare My praise" (Isa. 43:21).<sup>\*</sup> In the same chapter Isaiah shares a companion thought: "Everyone who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory; . . . I have made him" (Isa. 43:7).

Praise is expressing our appreciation of God, and there are many ways to do it: through a personal life of integrity, through personal sharing and witnessing, through preaching. In addition, we can praise God through our lips. And we've been designed in such a way that we experience our full potential as God's children only when we maintain the spirit and attitude of constant praise.

Praise has always been part of God's purpose for His creatures.<sup>2</sup> Reflecting on the formative period of this planet, God posed a question to Job: "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . . Or who laid its cornerstone, when all the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (Job 38:4-7).

Get the picture here? Even before God had executed the breathtaking artistry of Eden and the awesome complexity of human creation, the sons of God, the angelic beings, already had enough reason to raise a paean of praise in honor of His awesome greatness.

And as there was praise in the beginning, so will there be in the end. John the revelator, as he witnessed the fulfillment of salvation's plan, saw a great multitude in heaven "of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before



*It was God's intention that praise should be woven into the very fabric of life.*

the Lamb, . . . crying out with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!' (Rev. 7:9, 10).

No halfhearted praise here. No subdued eulogy do we hear, but full praise. Loud praise. Praise that reverberates throughout the universe.

It was God's intention that praise should be woven into the very fabric of life. Psalm 148 directs the entire created order to give praise to the Lord. Angels, celestial bodies, waters, sea creatures, mountains, trees, and animals are all admonished—along with the whole of humankind—to praise the Lord. When the Jerusalem clergy objected to the festive mood of praise during Jesus' triumphal entry into the city at the beginning of the Passion Week, Jesus said to them: "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out" (Luke 19:40).

There is a time for quietness. For reflection. For the still, small voice. But there's also a time for praise, a time when it would be disrespectful to remain quiet.<sup>3</sup>

Does the exercise of praise make any difference in our lives?

I think it does. I deduce this from something connected with Jesus' cleansing of the Temple (see Matt. 21:1-17). As songs of praise from the lips of children echoed through the Temple after He had routed the money

changers, the infuriated priests complained to Him: "Do You hear what these are saying?"

"Indeed I do," replied Jesus. He said, in effect, "Don't you know your Bibles? It says, 'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise.'" He had quoted from Psalm 8:2, which reads "Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength."

The question is Why did He substitute the word "praise" for the word "strength"? Might it be that He wished to indicate a relationship between strength and praise? I think so. I believe that there is power in praise.

Praise fosters love. Praise fosters joy, and peace, and purity, and holiness, and every other heavenly quality that God offers us. By praising God, we focus on Him. And by beholding, we are changed (see 2 Cor. 3:18).

So what kind of worshiper are you? Do you simply endure the worship journey? Or do you experience it as an adventure?

Back in the mid-1950s British pastor W. E. Sangster came down with an incurable disease that would result in progressive muscular atrophy. With time he would not be able to walk, talk, or even swallow.

But instead of surrendering to his fate, Sangster hurled himself into missionary work all around him. If he couldn't preach, he'd write. If he couldn't visit, he'd pray even more.

In time his legs became useless and his voice became silent. But he could still hold a pen shakily. "On Easter morning, just a few weeks before he died, he wrote a letter to his daughter. In it, he said, 'It is terrible to wake up on Easter morning and have no voice to shout: "He is risen!" But it would be still more terrible to have a voice and not want to shout.'<sup>4</sup>

Let us live a life of praise here and now. Let's read again and again the praise verses in the Bible and allow them to prepare us for an eternity of praise. I want to be included in that vast sea of humanity that will gather

one day soon around the throne of God (see Rev. 7:9-12). If my life here is one of praise, I won't feel out of place or awkward there. Instead, I will thrill as I see Jesus and hear my voice blend with that of a zillion others, singing, "Hallelujah! Salvation belongs to God, who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb, our Saviour, Jesus Christ."

\* Scripture references are from the New King James Version.

<sup>1</sup> Nephology is the science of the study of clouds.

<sup>2</sup> For this overview of praise in the Scriptures, I'm indebted to Jack R. Taylor, *The Hallelujah Factor* (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1983), pp. 26-34.

<sup>3</sup> See *Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 212, 213.

<sup>4</sup> Craig B. Larson, ed., *Illustrations for Preaching and Teaching From Leadership Journal* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1995), p. 64.

Bryan Aalborg is senior pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Burleson, Texas.



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# When Your Heart Is Breaking

This is a quick, short note to share my heart-break—the passing of my precious wife, Betty. Any ideas you would be willing to pass along to me, please do. Especially on how to (1) cope with this grief, (2) deal with the aloneness and loneliness, and (3) make God real when hurting.”

I put the letter down, feeling my own emotions flood through me like a river released from its banks without warning. We had not had much contact in the past 11 years. The yearly Christmas cards hit the highlights of our lives—children, trips, new pursuits. But nowhere had anybody said anything about death.

I couldn't sit down, respond as if there *were* any answers, dole out a few one-liners that would put his shattered life back together. And so I called.

We talked about Betty—of our days together as pastoral couples in neighboring districts. I spoke of the art class Betty and I had enrolled in together. Two pastors' wives sitting and mixing watercolors, enjoying a rare free era in our lives. I had never finished my painting, I told him, what with the arrival of my first child. And three years later my second. And the hectic pace of the ministry. And classwork. And jobs.

But now I would find that painting.

Eleven years after starting that painting of a weathered boat resting on the shore, I'm going to finish it. I'm going to think of the quiet days of another time and place, sitting at my table with Betty. I'm going to remember her gentle conversations, that lilting laugh, the feeling of acceptance and love that always followed her into a room. I'm going to paint for Betty.

He thanked me. We cried for a while. Then we talked some more. We laughed. We held on to one another 2,000 miles apart. Then we said goodbye.

Our connection had been brief, but meaningful. For those few moments his pain had at least been shared. But I knew that he alone would continue to bear it; my prayers, my letters, my calls, would only trace the surface of his anguish.

As I reflected upon our phone call, I thought of all those who find themselves arriving in their later years only to suffer a loss—of a spouse, a dream, their health. It takes immense effort to maintain the dignity of daily life while wrestling with sorrow.

To those who suffer, to those left with only their memories, I offer the lines of a simple prayer penned by Max Ehrmann a century ago.

*We cried. We talked.  
We laughed.*

## A Prayer

Let me do my work each day;  
And if the darkened hours of  
despair overcome me,  
May I not forget the strength that  
comforted me

In the desolation of other times.

May I still remember the bright hours that found me  
Walking over the silent hills of my childhood,  
Or dreaming on the margin of the quiet river,  
When a light glowed within me,  
And I promised my early God to have courage  
Amid the tempests of the changing years.  
Spare me from bitterness  
And from the sharp passions of unguarded moments;  
May I not forget that poverty and riches are of the spirit.

Though the world know me not,  
May my thoughts and actions be such  
As shall keep me friendly with myself.  
Lift my eyes from the earth,  
And let me not forget the uses of the stars.  
Forbid that I should judge others,  
Lest I condemn myself.  
Let me not follow the clamor of the world,  
But walk calmly in my path.  
Give me a few friends who will love me for what I am;  
And keep ever burning before my vagrant steps  
The kindly light of hope.  
And though age and infirmity overtake me,  
And I come not within sight of the castle of my dreams,  
Teach me still to be thankful for life,  
And for time's olden memories that are good and sweet;  
And may the evening's twilight find me gentle still.

*Sandra Doran will soon complete her doctoral degree in special education at Boston University. Her new business, Powerlines, specializes in writing, speaking, and educational services.*





# Stephano Tsukamoto— A Molder of Young Lives

*Angrily he said to Stephano, “You quit this crazy church business or get out of my house.”*

BY TED F. WICK

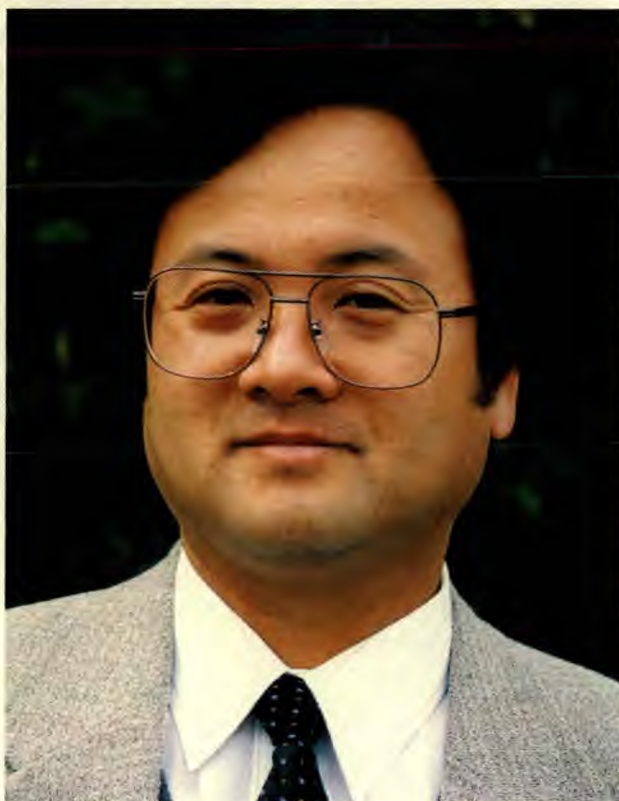
**W**HEN I WALK INTO HIS OFFICE, I can see that he is restless—moving like a caged creature that is more at ease outdoors. He is moving quickly, preparing to take a group of volunteers to help earthquake victims in Kobe, Japan.

In a matter of hours his van and two large busloads of young-adult volunteers will begin the four-hour drive to a shelter where those who lost their homes are eating and sleeping. The 200 volunteers will spend the next few days providing services to those homeless ones.

Stephano Tsukamoto is comfortable handling groups in challenging settings—he has led 17 volunteer service projects since 1988. He has combined the demands of being the Adventist youth director for Japan with the mission of Adventist Development and Relief Agency International—taking youth to various countries and building clinics,

drug rehabilitation centers, and schools.

How has this energetic young man worked in this traditional society with such powerful results? A look at his beginnings will provide some clues.



Stephano Tsukamoto

**S**tephano was born in South America to Japanese parents, his mother being part Brazilian. She had a Catholic background; his father professed no particular religion. When Stephano was 5, his family returned to Japan.

When Stephano was 8, his mother died of cancer. Quickly the question of death and the meaning of life confronted him—even at this early age. His mother had left him her Spanish-language Bible, but he could not find it among his things. His father, after the shock of losing his wife, became an active and devout Buddhist.

At age 13 Stephano prepared to attend a vocational school. While packing, he came across his mother's Bible, with a cross on the cover. Finding it stirred up



the feeling in his heart that he should get to know what was in that Book for himself. His newly awakened desire found some fulfillment in a Bible class conducted by an Evangelical pastor from Finland. For several months in the Bible class Stephano learned the basics of Christianity and a few words of Finnish, fueling his interest in linguistics.

During his teens attending Bible classes gave way to baseball practice. His father would get him up early in the morning to practice with him. Stephano became obsessed with baseball. He became an excellent player and had ambitions to begin a baseball career.

In vocational school Stephano became a certified engineering draftsman. But he desired to go on to the university and study linguistics, so at age 19 he decided to attend a university preparatory school to improve his chances of acceptance into the university.

During his prep school year in Tokyo he asked his landlady whether there was a Christian church nearby. She pointed to a building with a cross on it not too far away. Stephano stopped by one day and discovered that they held worship services on Saturdays. Since he went to class on Saturday mornings, he didn't get there until early afternoon—in time for the youth choir practice.

For a while he came only to choir practice. Then he started attending worship on Sabbath morning. His father soon got a note from the school stating that Stephano was not showing up for classes on Saturday mornings. Angrily he said to Stephano, "You must quit this crazy church business or get out of my house."

With this ringing in his ears, Stephano went to tell the pastor's wife that he must stop attending. She referred him to Matthew 6:33: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." She said, "Stephano, you read the Bible until you know the truth yourself, then you will know what to do." He knew

enough at that moment to know that he must stand up and become a Seventh-day Adventist.

That decision alienated him from his father and knocked out any support for him to go to college. He ended up asking the Catholic priest in his hometown of Kyoto for counsel as to what to do, being very up-front about being a member of the Adventist Church. The priest had lived in the same part of Brazil where Stephano had spent his early childhood.

After listening to Stephano's story, he absented himself to make a couple phone calls; soon he came back and offered Stephano an academic scholarship to Sophia University in Tokyo. He also intervened with a friend to offer Stephano a job working in the Brazilian Embassy. Stephano later paid back the scholarship, as he obtained a well-paying part-time job writing multilingual service manuals for the industrial giant Mitsubishi.

After two years Stephano decided to attend Japan Missionary College. Stephano's professor at Sophia gave his consent for Stephano to go for one year, with the agreement that he would return to the university program that he had begun. During this time he met the young woman who was to become his wife, a nursing student named Mami. They now have two daughters, Nihu and Mana.

Stephano completed ministerial training, but had no dreams about being a pastor—his interest in linguistics led him to think of being a translator of books or a teacher. One day Dr. Hilliard, a professor at the Adventist school, invited him to his office for an interview and encouraged Stephano to consider becoming a pastor. After

listening to his professor, he agreed that should the Lord open the way for him to become a pastor, he would respond to the opportunity.

Soon he was called to be a pastor in Hiroshima. While there he became discouraged, feeling that being a church pastor was not his calling. It was a crisis time. However, he was able to work with a student whose general appearance would have intimidated most pastors. Stephano presented simple but clear Bible teachings to this young woman, who made a complete turnaround in her life. The experience encouraged Stephano to continue in pastoral ministry.



**EVANGELISM THAT WORKS:** Sayaka Kishimoto was not a church member when she began working with ADRA projects of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Japan. She is an International Youth Cooperative Volunteer Service worker who has since been baptized, along with many other volunteers and former volunteers. Twenty were baptized in 1995 alone.





**THE HEALTH PRACTITIONERS:** Most volunteers are university students. However, some doctors and nurses also have provided clinical health care along with those doing the building projects. One popular activity is health education through puppets.



**JOYOUS BUILDERS:** Japanese young people volunteer to build clinics, schools, and other community projects.

The next year he moved to Tokyo and ministered to a number of young adults, with similar success. With this special gift, his ministry became defined, and in time he became youth director of the East Japan Conference.

His answers to young adults struggling with life's questions as they attend university have never been bookish. Even though he speaks several languages and has a degree in linguistics, he finds his destiny digging footings, laying brick, and organizing projects. Twenty baptisms resulted from involving youth in volunteer service projects in 1995 alone, despite the fact that response to Christianity is very limited in Japan, and response to Adventism even less.

In February Stephano was named director of Adventist Development and Relief Agency International/ Japan, though he is a young man still in his 30s. He no doubt will be talking with leaders of business and government in his new role. But

never will he feel that he has done his work without being involved in getting yet another youth group ready for action in mission service in Vietnam, Malaysia, Nepal, or some other place where people need help.

After overseeing 17 projects involving more than 1,200 volunteers, Stephano says that engaging youth in service is the most effective way to lead them to Christ and to a life dedicated to Him. God still has His hand in the continuing creation of people who, on the world's stage of action, make an impact on their generation. Such a person is Stephano. ■

*Ted F. Wick is director of the Office of Volunteers, Adventist Development and Relief Agency International, Silver Spring, Maryland.*





# Consistency

ANDY NASH

There was, in my childhood church, a special group of people who might not have known how much I liked them. Relics from yesteryear, living testimonies to bygone wars (II, I, Civil, Revolutionary), born even before Ellen White died, they quietly accepted their final label: old people.

To visitors and to teenagers, the old people in our church might have seemed unexciting, in the way, scary. But to me, a little kid, they were one thing and one thing only: consistent.

First, they were always on time. Road conditions that kept the postman in his toasty warm bed ("Hey, where's our mail?") couldn't keep the old people away from church. Even if they had to leave at half past seven, *even if they knew that the sermon was going to be an audiotape,*<sup>1</sup> they'd be there. The few times my family arrived early, I'd see the old people sitting in the empty sanctuary, reviewing their Sabbath school quarterlies while someone set up the screen for *Mission Spotlight*.

Second, they always had time for me. I never had to say something exciting just to hold their attention. They would just stand in the lobby after church and listen to me jabber about my new bike or my loose tooth or the batch of kittens our cat just had (one died) as much as I liked. Sometimes they would ask boring questions, such as "What did you learn in Sabbath school this morning?" But mostly I enjoyed talking with them. When everyone else was too busy to listen, they hung on my every word.

Now, while I liked most all the old people in our church, a few were extra-special:

*Harold and Aletha Olsen.* Our adopted grandparents, Harold and Aletha lived in a farmhouse across the street and up a steep driveway from our lake cottage. On Sabbath afternoons in the fall we would pull on our jeans jackets and go up to visit. Harold told good stories about animals. A few minutes into our conversation, Aletha would slip into the kitchen and return with rhubarb pie, sweet rolls, hot cocoa, and other morale builders. We always acted surprised that she had made something—"Oh, Aletha, you really shouldn't have"—but the truth is, if Aletha had ever returned from the kitchen with anything less than a bakery, we would have become faint, disoriented. Our friends on the hill spoiled us rotten—and we loved every minute of it.



PHOTO DISC

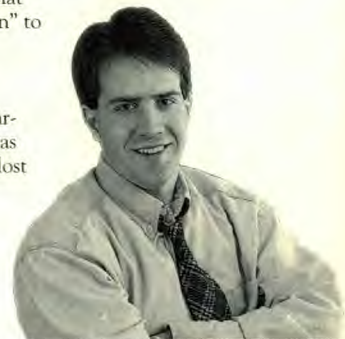
*Clarence Johnson.* I really didn't know Clarence very well, but for some reason I identified with him. He always seemed to get the short end of the stick. One night for amateur hour Clarence dusted off his old beat-up violin, carved away on it for five minutes, bowed, and sat down to warm applause. He looked pleased. Unfortunately for Clarence, the next act was the talented Gaylord Odegard and his accordion. As the rich melodies of Gaylord's accordion filled the fellowship hall and inspired people to cheer and clap along vigorously, Clarence looked as if he wished he hadn't brought along his old violin after all. I felt bad for Clarence; I knew what it was like to be upstaged. It wasn't fun.

*Dorothy Momb.* Dorothy, who baby-sat my sister Angel at our house, was alert and versatile, which came in handy. You *had* to be alert and versatile to baby-sit my sister.<sup>2</sup> But above all, Dorothy was supportive. She was always telling me that I was going to become a pastor someday. "Oh, you'll make such a fine pastor," she would say. Even though I didn't *want* to be a pastor (I wanted to be the coach of the Minnesota Vikings and maybe play a little, too), I was glad that Dorothy thought that I *could* be a pastor—even with all the dumb things I did. She believed in me, which was all I really ever needed from her.

Belief in me was all I really ever needed from any of them. And it's what I got.

<sup>1</sup> Besides being used on blizzard weekends, audiotapes were used as punishment against those who didn't go to camp meeting down in Hutchinson. One of the elders would give a brief introduction, telling how this message had meant a lot to him and how he hoped it did the same for us, then give a nod to Bob back at the sound equipment. The problem with audiotapes was that you were never sure where to look. Most just watched the pulpit because that's what they were used to. Some even said "amen" to the parts they especially liked.

<sup>2</sup> I'd come home from school, and Angel would have Dorothy's hair in curlers and her *Music Machine* album blaring in the background. Once Dorothy was chasing Angel down the stairs, and she lost her footing and began to roll, a tumbleweed in a dress. "Dorothy Momb!" yelled Angel. "Are you OK, Dorothy Momb?" Dorothy was fine—just a little dazed. It had been a while since she'd descended the stairs that quickly.





# Taking a Stand for Marriage

BY RONALD M. FLOWERS, GENERAL CONFERENCE FAMILY MINISTRIES DIRECTOR

**F**rom time to time the Seventh-day Adventist Church releases statements addressing issues of public interest. These statements are designed to be informative to the public and instructive and inspirational to our members. The church has issued statements on abortion, assisted human

reproduction, abuse and family violence, smoking and tobacco, literacy, and the environment.

Now General Conference leaders have approved "A Seventh-day Adventist Statement of Affirmation of Marriage" (see article below). It is timely to declare again the church's position about marriage, to express the

divine design for marital union and for human sexuality, which plays such a central role in the marriage relationship.

Statistics show that the incidence of premarital and extramarital sex is rising rapidly. Divorce has reached epidemic proportions. The current discussion surrounding same-sex

## Seventh-day Adventist Statement on Affirmation of Marriage

*This statement reaffirming marriage was released April 23 by General Conference leaders.*

Issues related to marriage can be seen in their true light only as they are viewed against the background of the divine ideal for marriage. Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus Christ to be both monogamous and heterosexual, a lifelong union of loving companionship between a man and a woman. In the culmination of His creative activity, God fashioned humankind as male and female in His own image; and He instituted marriage, a covenant-based union of the two genders physically, emotionally, and spiritually, spoken of in Scripture as "one flesh."

Arising from the diversity of the two human genders, the oneness of marriage images in a singular way the unity within diversity of the Godhead. Throughout Scripture the heterosexual union in marriage is elevated as a symbol of the bond between Deity and humanity. It is a human witness to God's self-giving love and covenant with His people. The harmonious affiliation of a man and a woman in marriage provides a microcosm of social unity that is time-honored as a core ingredient of stable societies. Further, the Creator intended married sexuality not only to serve a unitive purpose, but to provide for the propagation and perpetuation of the human family. In the divine purpose, procreation springs from and is entwined with the same process whereby husband and wife may find joy, pleasure, and physical completeness. It is to a husband and wife whose love has enabled them to know each other in a deep sexual bond that a child may be entrusted. Their child is a living embodiment of their

oneness. The growing child thrives in the atmosphere of married love and unity in which he or she was conceived and has the benefit of a relationship with each of the natural parents.

The monogamous union in marriage of a man and a woman is affirmed as the divinely ordained foundation of the family and social life and the only morally appropriate locus of genital or related intimate sexual expression. However, the estate of marriage is not God's only plan for the meeting of human relational needs or for knowing the experience of family. Singleness and the friendship of singles are within the divine design as well. The companionship and support of friends loom in importance in both biblical Testaments. The fellowship of the church, the household of God, is available to all regardless of their married state. Scripture, however, places a solid demarcation socially and sexually between such friendship relations and marriage.

To this biblical view of marriage the Seventh-day Adventist Church adheres without reservation, believing that any lowering of this high view is to that extent a lowering of the heavenly ideal. Because marriage has been corrupted by sin, the purity and beauty of marriage as it was designed by God needs to be restored. Through an appreciation of the redemptive work of Christ and the work of His Spirit in human hearts, the original purpose of marriage may be recovered and the delightful and wholesome experience of marriage realized by a man and a woman who join their lives in the marriage covenant.



marriage, which has made its way into the media, legislative halls, and courts, affords an opportunity for Adventists to affirm our beliefs about marriage.

Marriage is an institution that has social and religious aspects. The state, with its power to legislate, has authority over the social side. The church has an obligation to uphold that which God has made known about marriage and encourage individuals to experience marriage as the Creator planned.

At a time when the legislatures and courts are debating the secular meaning of marriage and making judgments regarding who may marry and partake of its legal, social, and financial benefits, the spiritual definition of marriage, including who may marry, should also be proclaimed.

The statement presents marriage as an institution created by God and affirmed by Jesus Christ. It describes

the heterosexual characteristic of the marriage institution and the unitive and procreative purpose of that attribute. The document also presents the notion of friendship of human beings with one another as an additional means of finding fellowship and emotional fulfillment, and for knowing the experiences of being family. However, genital or related intimate sexual expression is reserved for marriage and excluded from other friendships. Finally, the statement calls for a restoration of God's original ideals for marriage and presents the gospel as a means for restoring the purity and beauty of marriage.

As a denomination Adventists find their mission in proclaiming the gospel, with its call to "fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him who made heaven, and earth, and

the sea, and the fountains of waters" (Rev. 14:7).

At the core of this message is the command to exalt God, our Creator and Redeemer, and recognize our accountability to Him. This includes all human relationships, of which marriage is the centerpiece.

There is nothing more central to Adventist belief than the exaltation of Jesus Christ as Creator and Redeemer. Our rest on the seventh-day Sabbath symbolizes our spiritual rest in Him and allegiance to Him as Creator.

Marriage is a twin institution descending to us from Creation for the glory of God and the benefit of humanity.\* We truly worship God when we affirm marriage as He created it and conform our lives to His design for marriage.

\* The other is the Sabbath. See *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 63.

## N E W S B R E A K

### Commission on Women in Ministry Continues

The work of the North American Division's President's Commission on Women in Ministry met July 17 and 18 in Silver Spring, Maryland, to continue its ongoing work.

Voted at NAD's year-end meeting in November 1995, the commission is seeking ways to bring greater equality to women in professional ministry, says Don Jacobsen, assistant to the North American Division president for administration.

The commission is reviewing denominational policies and developing ways to expand the role of women in ministry, increase the participation of women at decision-making levels of the church, increase the participation of women in the organizational and professional levels of the church, and affirm women in pastoral and other spiritual ministries.

Jacobsen says the commission will bring an interim report to the upcoming NAD year-end meetings in November.

### Adventist Legislator Awarded National Honor

Randy Sauder, a state legislator in Georgia and a member of the Marietta Adventist Church, was selected for



Randy Sauder

the 1996 National Legislator of the Year Award by the National Republican Legislators Association.

Sauder was selected for the award from more than 3,500 Republican state legislators and cited for becoming the first freshman house member of the Georgia General Assembly to pass statewide legislation in that session.

### Target 50,000 Update

Thus far, 37,500 persons have joined the Adventist Church as a result of the Target 50,000 evangelistic series in the Philippines, reports Voice of Prophecy public relations director Eldyn Karr.

VOP and many other denominational entities co-sponsored the Target 50,000 outreach to commemorate the *Voice of Prophecy's* fiftieth anniversary in the Philippines. "It takes quite a while for many areas to report their result," Karr says. "But church leaders in the Philippines are confident the final tally will be at least 50,000."

VOP has captured stories and pictures of the meetings in a new book, *Bodyguards, Bombs, and Baptismal Barrels*, which is available at Adventist Book Centers.

The broadcast ministry has also established an Internet



## TOP 5 Top Five Influences in Becoming an Adventist

Raised in an Adventist home	42.5%
Introduced by a friend, relative, or acquaintance	29.0%
Attended public evangelistic meetings	14.0%
Visited at home by a pastor or Bible instructor	12.0%
Given Bible studies by a member	10.5%

These are the median scores from the 11 world divisions of the church; more than one response was possible. Source: 1993 World Survey Report to the Annual Council of the General Conference Executive Committee.

—Compiled by R. William Cash, director, Office of Archives and Statistics, General Conference.

## For Your Good Health

**Hit the Road.** To reduce your risk of stroke, take a walk. A study of more than 9,000 White males age 50 to 60 showed that those with inactive lifestyles were nearly seven times more likely to suffer a stroke than men who were moderately or very active. A daily walk of one mile was found to be the minimum for reducing stroke risk.—*University of California Berkeley Wellness Letter*

**Low Pressure Keys.** Have an apple a day—or a carrot or grapes. Diets rich in these, along with oranges, prunes, spinach, celery, alfalfa, and mushrooms, were related to reduced risk of developing high blood pressure. The possible link? They're all rich in magnesium.—*American Heart Association*

**Now Will You Stop?** A new Dutch study gives smokers extra motivation to stay off tobacco. Patients who continued smoking for one year after having coronary bypass surgery had more than twice the risk of heart attack and reoperation compared to patients who gave up the habit after surgery. The risks were even higher for those still smoking five years after bypass. —*American Heart Association*

Compiled by Larry Becker, editor of *Vibrant Life*, the church's health outreach journal. To subscribe, contact your ABC or call 800-765-6955.

## NEWS BREAK

site at [www.vop.com](http://www.vop.com). The web page offers news and information about the ministry and sections for Bible questions and prayer requests.



**STRINGING ALONG:** Adventist students from Maryland share their talents at Disney World.

### Maryland Musicians Perform at Disney World

The Sligo Strings, a group of student violinists, performed at Disney World's Epcot Center on June 16. The ensemble is under the direction of Evonne Baasch, of the Sligo Adventist School in Takoma Park, Maryland.

Each student received a commemorative plaque for their performance.

### Evangelism Takes Hold in Colombia

The Upper Magdalena Conference in Colombia recently launched an assertive evangelistic initiative that combines the work of members, conference personnel, and youth.

Outreach meetings conducted in rural districts by pastors and conference administrators resulted in 498 baptisms. In Bogotá a series held by Miguel Angel Presuel, an evangelist from the South Mexican Union, resulted in 505 baptisms. In Ibagué a series conducted by Pastor Leonel Pottinger, from the Central American Union, resulted in 70 baptisms. Within 60 days the conference recorded a total of 1,075 baptisms.—*Inter-American Division Contact*

### Olympic Torchbearer Takes Sabbath Stand



**Trinnie Trujillo**

Two more Adventists carried the Olympic torch than originally listed in our July North American Division issue. When Olympic officials assigned a date to Trinnie Trujillo, of Tulsa, Oklahoma, it turned out to be on Sabbath (May 18).

Trujillo refused to run on the Sabbath and appealed to Olympic officials. She was allowed to run on Sunday morning (May 19).

And Melissa Marshall, a member of the Adventist church in Bourbon, Missouri, was asked to carry the Olympic torch in Arnold, Missouri, on May 28.



# The Unforgettable Talking Frogs

BY MYRON WIDMER, ASSOCIATE EDITOR OF THE ADVENTIST REVIEW

If you've watched sports on TV this year, you can't miss them—three frogs sitting on lily pads croaking out the sounds of a sign above a bar on shore. They begin with a random order of syllables—"weis-er-bud-weis-bud-er"—until their clever croaking becomes an orchestrated symphony of "Bud-weis-er." Self-satisfaction drips from their big smiles and chuckles.

Instantly the three frogs became a hit. Kids loved them and ran around mimicking them. Then at the peak of their popularity, out came the next commercial: the same frogs sitting by the road. When a Budweiser truck goes flying by, one frog sticks its long tongue out and catches a wild, hilarious ride.

Then Budweiser bottles played football during Super Bowl commercials. Then the "I love you, man" commercials took beer advertising to a higher (or lower?) level in impact. The ad's corny main character feigns love just to get access to someone's Bud Light beer.

The commercials have been achieving just what they are

supposed to—catch people's attention *and sell beer*. They've won top honors time and again for the most creative, most memorable, most popular television ads (*USA Today*, June 28, 1996).

Millions of youth know the "frogs" and "Bud-weis-er" far better than Jesus and Christianity. And these "humanized" creatures effectively make disgusting products appear cool, normal, and the "in" thing, inviting more young people.

And that's sad. For it seems that the secular world—particularly *beer* companies—appears to have greater creativity, greater resources, greater energy, and greater impact in promoting its cause than we Christians do ours (see Luke 16:8).

Might these three frogs have something in common with the "three foul spirits like frogs" that come forth from the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet in the end-time (Rev. 16:13, NRSV)?

They come with loud (effective) voices, but they're still frogs, maybe even toads, not three angels (Rev. 14).

## NEWS COMMENTARY

## NEWS BREAK

### Personal Ministry Congress Convenes in Florida

Anyone interested in sharing the gospel with friends and neighbors is invited to the Second United Laypersons Congress that convenes August 29-September 1 in Orlando, Florida.

Twenty-six workshops will cover biblical topics and practical tools for evangelism and the nurturing of new members. The congress is sponsored by the regional conferences within the North American Division. For more information, contact Elder Horace Jones at 404-792-0535 or fax 404-792-7817.

### News Notes

✓ **Australian youth in the South New South Wales** Conference recently discovered a creative ministry when they refurbished and painted an old school bus. The donated double-decker bus will be used to conduct puppet and clowning ministries and kids' clubs.—*South Pacific Division Record*.

✓ **More than 3,000 persons** attended the opening night of an evangelistic series in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, on July 7, reports General Conference president Robert S. Folkenberg. The next night the audience increased to more than 6,000. The meetings were

conducted by Australian evangelist Neil Watts.

✓ **The Adventists On-line Forum on CompuServe** crossed the 5,000-member mark on June 19 at 6:03 p.m. (Eastern time) when Joachim Baur of Germany signed on, reports Ralph Blodgett, forum sysop.

To commemorate the event, 300 forum members participated in a contest to guess the time when the 5,000th member would join. Lydia Newton, of Granbury, Texas, registered the closest time, and she received *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* on CD-ROM—compliments of the Review and Herald Publishing Association.

To request a free Adventists On-line Forum membership packet, call 1-800-260-7171 or 616-471-6083.

✓ **The Adventist Development and Relief Agency** is seeking volunteers for several short-term mission vacancies, including a construction supervisor and nurse, south Sudan; teaching assistants, Nepal; grant writers in Bolivia, Honduras, and Sri Lanka; and an office manager in Sri Lanka. For more information, call Jan Erntson at 301-680-6738.

### What's Coming!

Sept.	7	Lay Evangelism emphasis
Sept.	14	Missions Extension Offering
Sept.	14-21	<i>Adventist Review</i> emphasis





# WOW! Great Stories for Kids!

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[Written by Jerry D. Thomas, author of the popular *Detective Zack* books and the *Shoebox Kids* stories.]

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### Here's what others are saying about *Great Stories for Kids*:

"These stories are so much fun, kids won't realize that they're learning! *Great Stories for Kids* is the greatest set of books for children our church has created in several decades."

**Aileen Andres Sox, editor, *Primary Treasure/Our Little Friend***

"My children have already sampled the merchandise and given it the 'thumbs up' sign. Our department is pleased to promote this fine publication for children."

**Willie Oliver, director of family ministries, NAD**

"Author Jerry D. Thomas knows how to tell a simple story with all the drama and suspense that gets kids in. Throughout, the language and graphics are inclusive; no child will feel left out."

**Noelene Johnson, director of children's ministries, NAD**

"The stories are great—the best I've ever seen for kids. Our kids absolutely love them! *Great Stories for Kids* is teaching the same lessons that we're trying to teach our children."

**Myron Widmer, associate editor, *Adventist Review***

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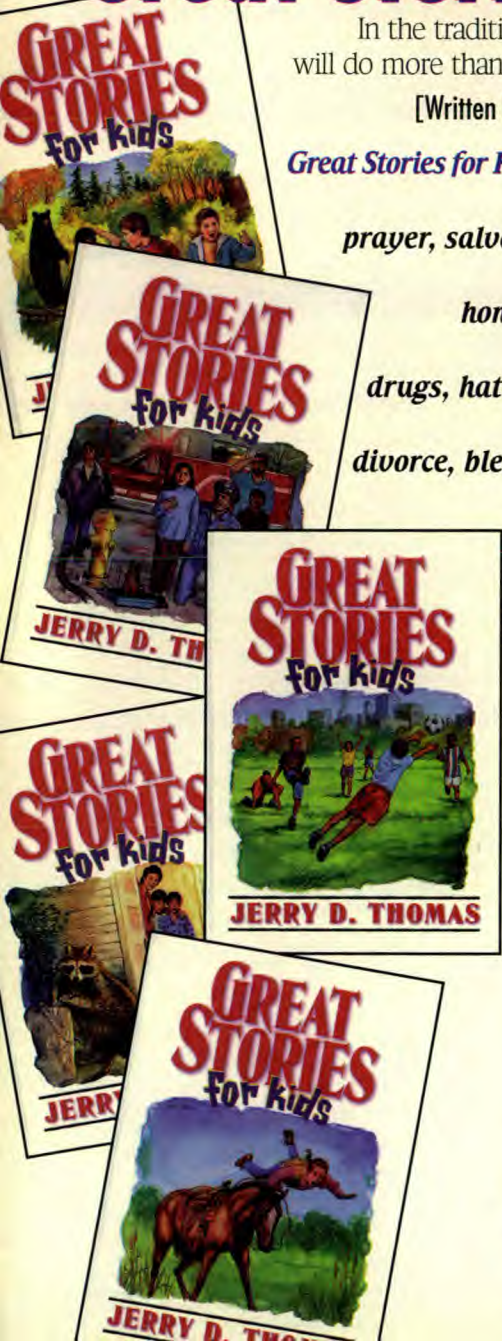
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# BOOK

• M A R K •



## The Appearing

Penny Estes Wheeler,  
*Review and Herald*  
Publishing Assn.,  
Hagerstown, Md.,  
1996, US\$10.99,  
Cdn\$15.99, 224

pages, paperback. Reviewed by Ella Rydzewski, editorial assistant, Adventist Review.

**T**he *Appearing* is an updated reprint of Penny Estes Wheeler's original work some 20 years ago. In the preface she contemplates "why the world will so hate God's people." However, the end-time remnant will not be the first group that the world has hated.

Recently researcher Daniel Goldhagen published his findings on people who participated in the Holocaust. He shocked us with the news that the executioners were not social deviants, nor did Hitler force them to murder their Jewish neighbors. They included ordinary people with families who lived normal lives outside their grisly jobs, and few refused to engage in the torture and extermination. Some even volunteered. They held in common not socio-pathology, but hatred for a group of people they believed caused them societal and economic problems.\*

It couldn't happen here in the land of religious liberty, the Constitution, and civil rights. Or could it?

Biblical and church prophecy indicate that it could. Wheeler follows the lives of three main characters as they flee the time of

trouble. Apparently the end of probation for the earth has closed, since the story includes no last-minute conversions.

As the end of the century approaches, apocalyptic books and films like *Independence Day* have captured public attention. Wheeler's descriptive writing rivals that of secular sci-fi authors. She tells of annihilation, not by alien beings, but by unsuspected, unseen evil forces unleashed upon the world. Even scientist Garrett can't convince his colleagues that more lies behind the spreading diseases he tries to cure than random bad luck. But a growing number believe the chaos to be God's punishment because some will not cooperate with the "National Worship Code." And these ordinary people are more vicious than any of Hollywood's bug-eyed aliens.

The author spares us the parochialism of having an organized religious group as God's people. Instead, she calls them people of "The Way" (and they keep the Sabbath).

Besides Garrett, who stays in the city, we follow Amy, a mother grieving the loss of her child, as she flees into the desert with other families. The most disturbing story is that of Arianne, who becomes a prisoner in a concentration camp awaiting execution. We recall Holocaust stories as soldiers kick and beat their charges, and a grotesque woman guard screams, "I hate you!"

The unrelenting action continues until each character meets Christ at His appearing. This includes Kevin, who has died of a pretribulation heart attack, but awakens the next instant (to him) and joins in "The appearing."

Perhaps the story should have stopped here. But the narrative continues, attempting to describe scenes too glorious for the human mind to visualize, as millions accompany Christ to heaven.

The plot itself is somewhat unimaginative—you've probably heard it in an academy Bible class. Everything goes as expected. There are no surprises—no helpful Schindlers, no

betraying Judases. The story intertwines fear and doubt with more pain than a human being can bear, yet its characters exhibit great reservoirs of faith. We see few miracles among the group in their crises. They struggle seemingly alone in their horrors, with no appreciable evidence they are anything but another of the world's despaired. Then one day those in the prison notice that while everyone else is dying from a virulent plague, people of The Way do not contract it.

The author, one of the denomination's most powerful and talented writers, makes her point—be prepared for the end-time. After you have read this book, you won't forget what it says for a long time.

\*Daniel Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners* (New York: Knopf Publishers, 1996).

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**NET '96 Reignites Evangelism.**

**Simi Valley, California: Five Words Bring Hope**

The handwritten note on the corrected Discover lesson helped Catherine replace her destructive tendencies of the past 20 years.

"We are praying for you," the instructor wrote on the Discover lesson, one of the 1 million being sent out as preparation for NET '96 evangelistic meetings.

Catherine is an inmate in a California prison. "Those five words filled me with more hope and love than I'd ever felt before," she wrote back.







# Can We Make Peace in the Gender War?

*Five principles can help us cooperate rather than compete.*

BY ARLENE TAYLOR

THEY WERE LEAVING THE supermarket as I was getting out of my car. Their shopping cart was filled to overflowing. A bunch of celery and a baguette stuck up out of one bag. A watermelon balanced precariously on top of another bag.

"I don't want to *check out* the new outlet," said the man with firmness and finality. The woman beside him was as tiny as he was tall. Her face fell. She pressed the key button in her hand, and the trunk of a white Mustang flew open.

"Let's just put the groceries in the car and look for a few minutes," she continued. "I'd really like to see what lines of clothing they carry."

"I hate shopping!" His voice was louder now. "Most men do." Grabbing two large sacks from the cart, he clutched one under each arm and stepped across the cement divider to the car. She picked up one bag and held it to her chest.

"When are you going to learn to carry a bag under each arm like I do?" he asked, adding under his breath, "It's twice as fast."

She picked up a second bag and tried to do as he suggested. It didn't work. First one slipped and then the other. They hit the pavement almost in unison. Groceries rolled everywhere.

Turning to help, I started chasing oranges, apples, onions, and potatoes. The three of us worked in silence. Fortunately, most items were salvageable. Unfortunately, one bottle of spaghetti sauce had exploded all over the side of the white Mustang. Noticing the unusual Art Deco pattern, I tried unsuccessfully to stifle my giggles. Two pairs of eyes followed my gaze to the artsy car. They couldn't help chuckling. It was catching. Before long we were all laughing heartily.

"Couldn't help overhearing your earlier conversation," I commented, taking a deep breath. "It might go easier on your grocery bill if you recognize a male/female difference here. That is," I added offhandedly, "while men may find it easy to carry a sack under each arm, women usually find it easier to carry packages hugged to the chest."

The man paused, one hand on the car. "I thought all this male/female differences stuff was so much hype. Are you telling me there is some truth to it?"

We stood for another 10 minutes in lively discussion. They were absolutely delightful. "I wanted to go browse through the new outlet," the woman offered, "but now I'd rather go home and read the gender-differences book we got for Christmas."

"Deal!" her husband said quickly. "Anything to avoid browsing through the new outlet."

"That's another male/female difference," I added. "Maybe your book'll mention that." They both smiled and waved as they drove off, the splattered sauce already beginning to blur in the wind.



## Five Basic Principles

Because men and women don't understand each other very well, many minor irritations in life can spark major arguments. Sometimes we hurl hurtful words at each other, words that can't be recalled.

Books such as *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus*, by John Gray, have helped heighten our awareness. It's vitally important to approach this topic with a few basic principles in mind, however. Otherwise we risk creating differences between men and women where none exist or locking ourselves into stereotypical roles that limit our options.

**H**ere are five principles that my husband and I have found exceedingly helpful in our discussions of gender differences.

♥ *The male and female brains are more alike than they are different.*

We both belong to the same species. However, there are differences that need to be recognized and honored in order to minimize relationship problems.

I often compare these differences to driving a car with a stick shift versus an automatic transmission. The two cars may be very similar, but if we don't adjust our driving technique to match the design, operating the car can be a disaster.

♥ *We sometimes use the word "different" with complete abandon and fail to realize that it simply means "unlike."*

To be "unlike" does not imply that we are unequal. Some innate characteristics of each gender are unlike those of the other. Yet they are equally valuable. Equality is a concept that, by definition, suggests the state of being neither superior nor inferior.

♥ *Research about gender differences is often stated in generalizations.*

Conclusions from research that apply to large groups of people—perhaps even to two thirds of any given population—do not apply to everyone. There are many exceptions, and there is much diversity. It is

dangerous to assume that everyone conforms to one study's generalizations. A full third of men and a third of women may *not* exhibit the stated characteristics.

♥ *Some so-called male/female differences have more to do with how an individual uses his or her brain than with genuine gender differences.*

*When all is said and done, women and men are more alike than different. We are, after all, the same species.*

Because we know a particular man or woman very well, we may think all men and women possess similar characteristics. But who we are as individuals is determined by much *more than gender alone*.

In the case of brain function, each of us seems to have a particular biochemical "preference" for processing information in one of the cerebral brain quadrants rather than the others. For example, we sometimes hear it said that females speak 50,000 words per day, while males speak 12,000 words per day. In actuality, some women speak far fewer words per day. And some men don't stop talking until they fall asleep.

♥ *A predisposition is not a mandate for action.*

In other words, we are not locked into exhibiting certain behaviors simply because we may have a gender preference.

Think about the couple I

mentioned earlier. The *average* male (not *all* males) approaches shopping as a hunting expedition. He has a *goal* in mind, selects a quarry to match the goal, shoots it, bags it, throws it in the trunk, and heads for home.

The average female, on the other hand, is more likely to browse. She sees shopping in terms of a *process*: an opportunity to do something different, to check out what's new, to have lunch and connect with a shopping companion through conversation. If she is able to, she purchases some of the items on her list. She might even bag a bargain that wasn't on her list. So much the better!

Because men and women often approach shopping differently, however, doesn't mean we have to be locked into these stereotypical behaviors. Couples *can* shop together and truly enjoy it. For example, the woman can generate a list, and the man can help her hunt. In turn, he can respect her need for process and allot some time and energy for meaningful conversation—perhaps over lunch or a simple refreshment.

The goal in gender relations—and particularly for Christians—is not just to survive in a state of truce, but collaboratively to build an enduring bridge. If we focus on a truce, our differences can still irritate us and poke thorns in the fabric of our everyday lives. But when we build bridges of understanding we can move to relational accord.

A bridge allows us to cross over, as it were; to move freely back and forth between two positions, to view our differences as unique gifts that can enrich each other's lives, to find genuine humor and lasting satisfaction in sharing. Why not become a bridge builder today? ■

Arlene Taylor, Ph.D., founder and president of Realizations, Inc., conducts seminars and writes from Napa, California.







ROSY TETZ

**H**ave you ever made a fan? You decorate a piece of paper, then fold it back and forth into strips. Then it is stiff enough to push air toward you when you hold one end and wave it.

There are lots of different kinds of fans. They all do the same thing—they blow air around. They all do it for the same reason—to cool you off.

Have you ever wondered why a fan can cool you off? After all, the air that the fan blows around is the same temperature as the rest of the air. Why does it feel cooler?

It is because you are like a little heater. Your body is warm enough to heat up the air surrounding you. So on a hot day, wherever you flop down you start heating up the air around you, and you just sit there getting hotter and sweatier and stickier.

Ah, but when a breeze blows by, it pushes away the air that you have been heating up. Cooler air takes its place, and the breeze feels cool on your skin. The moving air also helps the sweat on your skin evaporate more quickly, which helps you feel cooler too.

A breeze feels good because it is moving.

Sometimes people flop down on a certain idea and won't move. They think, *This idea is right*—and they won't listen to any other ideas. It is as if they are building a little fence around their idea so no breezes can blow on it and change it. It gets stuffy.

John the Baptist could see the people of his time doing that. He told them what Jesus was going to do. "He will come ready to clean the

grain. He will separate the good grain from the chaff" (Matt. 3:12, ICB). (Chaff is the papery covering on the grain; it is worthless.)

The people he talked to knew how that was done. They fanned the grain as it was being tossed into the air. The breeze they made blew the chaff away from the useful part of the grain, which fell back to the floor.

John warned the people that Jesus was coming to shake things up, blow away a lot of bad ideas, and find the people who were willing to change.

Jesus still wants to do that. Don't be afraid of change. Keep your mind open. Invite Jesus to breeze into your life.



PHOTODISC

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# What Is True Worship?

BY MICHELLE BEACH IZZO

**T**wo thousand feet up on Mount Parnassus in Greece lies the ancient, sacred city of Delphi. After a long and arduous climb to the top you see a stadium, longer than a football field, that offers a spectacular view for miles around of rugged, unspoiled mountains. In the temple at Delphi the Greeks believed that the god Apollo communicated to them through an oracle, advising them on matters of war, business, and romance. Individuals from all over the Greek world brought rich gifts to Apollo to hear their future told.

On a visit to Delphi I was among the ruins of monuments and temples to false, pagan gods. Nevertheless, I felt God's presence. The vastness of the beautiful nature before me and my feeble smallness made me contemplate the Greek way of worship.

For the Greeks, Delphi was a place of revelation: they believed that Apollo's oracle always spoke the truth. We too believe a sanctuary is a place where God makes revelations.

Peter describes his experience on the Mount of Transfiguration as one where they heard a "voice from heaven" that came on "the sacred mountain"<sup>1</sup> and it was at the top of Mount Sinai that God revealed the Ten Commandments to Moses.

Traditionally many cultures have placed the worship of their gods in mountains or have built tall pillars and temples to "connect" earth to heaven. Entering a sanctuary helps humans transcend the profane world. Delphi models this concept.

In the Old Testament, Jacob dreamed of a ladder reaching to heaven and heard God speak to him. When he awoke, he said, "Truly the Lord is in this place. . . . This is no other than the house of God, this is the gate of heaven,"<sup>2</sup> and he set up a stone as a sacred pillar to be the house of the Lord.

But sacred space and finding truth aren't everything. Somewhere the Greeks went wrong. For one thing, their gods acted on impulses and motives like their own; they hoped these gods would be moved by appeals to their pity and fears. And while the Greeks turned to Apollo for predictions and revelations, they believed nothing could change their fate once it was decreed by the oracle.

By contrast, we believe that our God does not decree the

details of our future. Our God challenges us to have faith and be confident about our future. Our God is moved by love.

What a shame the ancient Greeks did not know the God of love. Their worship was a ritual that arose out of their fear. Their gods were temperamental. They felt impelled to appease Apollo, and the "truth" they learned did not help them focus on their responsibilities. Instead, many fled their fate.

Standing on the top of Mount Parnassus helped me clarify what true worship is: a sacred experience in which a transformation takes place.

This is what happened for Saul of Tarsus when he came face-to-face with God. This is what happened for Peter, James, and John on the Mount of Transfiguration, and for Jacob when he heard God's voice.

*High on a  
mountain in  
Greece  
I gained a new  
perspective.*

## True Worship

A worship experience effects a change. First of all, it orients me as I experience genuine manifestations of truth in a place I have set aside as sacred. Saul changed from a religious dogmatist to an apostle of truth.

Second, it helps me focus on my responsibilities. The Greeks saw themselves only as pawns in the hands of fate. But once Saul met God, he never doubted his mission. When Jacob heard God, he made a vow to return one tenth of his earnings.

Worship is not just a momentary experience of passing exaltation, but an "abiding" and "dwelling" experience on God's "holy hill," as Psalm 15 indicates.

Up on the mountains of Delphi the Greeks had the right idea in *some* ways. It is a perfect *place* for worship. But I was thankful to meet there not a god of fate, but a God of love.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Peter 1:18, NEB.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. 28:16, 17, NEB.

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